



# News Release

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## Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the USDA Forest Service Sign an Agreement for Shared Stewardship

**January 5, 2021** – Today, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the USDA Forest Service signed an Agreement for Shared Stewardship, strengthening their commitment to collaborative land management efforts throughout the state. The signatories on the agreement were Colleen Callahan, Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Vicki Christiansen, Chief of the USDA Forest Service. The agreement establishes a framework to allow the state and the Forest Service to work collaboratively on forest management, accomplishing mutual goals, furthering common interests and effectively responding to the increasing suite of challenges facing the communities, landscapes and natural resources in Illinois.

"The agreement signed today simply puts into writing what we've been partnering with the USDA Forest Service to accomplish for decades," Callahan said. "It solidifies our partnership for future leaders in both agencies and ensures synergy for true conservation of forests and other natural resources which rely on our forests, including clean air, water and wildlife habitats."

"Shared Stewardship strengthens our commitment to coordinating and prioritizing forest management activities using our collective resources and authorities," said Christiansen. "The Forest Service has a long history of collaboration with the state of Illinois. This agreement will reinforce our partnership and make our working relationship even stronger."

The federal, state, and private land managers in Illinois face a range of urgent challenges, among them catastrophic storms, droughts, flooding, insect and disease outbreaks, invasive species, and increasing use from the public. These challenges must be met with proactive measures across all lands including:

- Restoring fire-adapted ecosystems and reducing the risk of wildfire.
- Identifying, managing, restoring, and reducing threats to forest and prairie ecosystems' health.
- Maintaining a sustainable use model to ensure forests meet the present and future demands for natural resources and public recreation.
- Fostering economic development strategies that keep working forests productive.

Healthy forests provide clean air and water, diverse plant and animal habitat, and support strong and resilient communities. Through working together, developing joint priorities and using collective authorities, the state and the Forest Service can be sure that the scale of the work will match the scale of the challenge.

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